

**SITE SURVEY REPORT**

N.C. Natural Heritage Program  
P.O. Box 27687 / Raleigh NC 27611

**Date:** May 1994 (June 1992)  
**Quad Name:** Highlands  
**Jackson County**  
**Province:** Blue Ridge

**Name of Site:** Whiteside Mountain-Devils Courthouse

**Surveyors:** Bob Dellinger, L.L. Gaddy, and J. Dan Pittillo, (compiler)

**Location & Directions:** West of Cashiers about 6 miles or east of Highlands 4 miles on U.S. 64, and south of Cowee Gap one mile to parking area.

**Size:** 552 acres. **Watershed:** Norton Mill and Green creeks/ Chattooga River.

**Owners and address:** USDA - Forest Service, P. O. Box 2750, Asheville, NC 28801; some privately owned areas of the cliffs (just below homes) are also included.

**Status:** Registered in part.

**Owner contacted & Attitude:** Whiteside Mountain has been deferred from timber management with recreation as its primary use by the USDA Forest Service (the peak and north slopes in Management Area 13; southern area in M.A. 4C, and newly purchased Couch tract in Uninventoried status). The private owners were not contacted (most data obtained before current owners purchased tracts).

**General Landscape Description:** This massive mountain located along the Eastern Continental Divide has some of the highest and most rugged cliffs in the East. Some of the outcrops on the lower portions of the south to east faces are the typical smooth rounded domes characteristic of the region. The main eastern face, however, is sheer for nearly 1,000 feet and contains a complex series of cracks and small caves. On the north face of the mountain is a similar though smaller cliff, the Devils Courthouse, with a nearly sheer drop of about 800 feet. Oak forests dominate the summit and much of the wooded slopes, except for portions of the north side, where a complex mosaic of Northern Hardwoods, High Elevation Northern Red Oak, and Hemlock Forest occur, and the lower slopes where Rich and Acidic Cove Forests predominate (Gaddy).

**Physical Description:**

**Aspect:** All but predominately north and southerly slopes.

**Slope:** 0° to vertical.

**Topog. Position:** Crest, upper slope, mid slope, lower slope.

**Hydrology:** Terrestrial.

**Moisture:** Wet mesic, mesic dry mesic, and xeric.

**Elevation:** 3700-4930 feet.

**Geology:**

**Quartz diorite to granodiorite:** Previously this formation was called Whiteside Granite (Pzw; Hadley and Nelson, 1971) or Cashiers Gneiss (McKniff, 1967). These igneous rocks are of Devonian age (390 million years) and are classed as Quartz diorite to granodiorite (NC Geological Survey, 1985).

**Soils:**

Cleveland Chestnut Rock outcrop complex (CpD, CpE, CpF) - Typic Dysrochepts(CI) and  
Lithic Dystrochrepts (Ch)

Cullasaja (CsE) - Typic Haplumbrepts

Cullasaja-Tuckasegee complex (CuE) - Typic Haplumbrepts

Rock outcrop Cleveland complex (RkF) - Lithic Dysrochepts

**Comments on Physical Description:** The Devils Courthouse apparently has a